

Fiscal Year 2017 Narrative

Department: Libraries

1. What do you want the Selectmen, Finance Committee and public know about what you've done in Fiscal Year 2015 and Fiscal Year 2016 (to date)?

All three libraries continue to be busy and vital to their villages. In FY 2015, 99,754 items were checked out at the three Montague Libraries. Overall circulation dipped less than 2% in FY 2015 compared to the year before, but has been increasing since. In November 2015, overall circulation was up over 14% compared to November, 2014. 4,767 patrons have library cards registered to the Montague Public Libraries.

Providing high quality, popular children's programming continues to be a strong mission. 158 programs were held inside the libraries or in Peskeompskut Park during calendar year 2014 with a total attendance of 5623. These programs included live music, hands-on science, technology, arts and crafts, bilingual education, and of course books. 32 outreach programs at local schools were held, with a total attendance of 752.

A five year long range plan for the libraries was written and approved by the state Board of Library Commissioners. This makes the libraries eligible for more grants. As part of the long range plan, customer evaluation forms were drafted and distributed. Over 150 were returned. These forms show how Montague residents view their libraries, what they feel is being done right, and suggestions for improvements. 99% of the surveys indicated library users were very pleased with library staff. However many felt open hours should be expanded and that the Carnegie in particular needs better maintaining, updating and expanding. Safe parking was cited as a need by many. Other needs were also listed, but will be addressed using outside funds.

A variety of changes have been made in the library collections based on ongoing customer feedback and survey results. Specific accomplishments include a concentrated effort to update non-fiction books with more up to date information. Underutilized novels are also being replaced with newer titles. More diverse books are being purchased. The large print collection in Turners Falls has been increased and moved to a more accessible location. A separate biography section was established at the Carnegie. More comfortable seating has been acquired for all three libraries through donations.

A very successful collaborative technology grant with Montague Catholic and the Council on Aging was funded by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. The grant funded equipment and weekly technology tutoring for the public. The sessions were very well attended and were often booked several weeks ahead.

2. Please explain any significant changes in your budget for Fiscal Year 2017, including any staff changes (if that impacts your budget).

Better maintaining the three library buildings has become a top priority for myself and the Library Trustees. The town already has too many buildings that are in terrible condition due to a lack of proper and preventative maintenance. Regardless of the long term uses of the three library buildings, they need to be better maintained unless the town wants to have more expensive

albatrosses. This year we are requesting additional funds through special article requests to repair and maintain the exteriors of the buildings. Without intact shells, repair costs will skyrocket in the future.

I have asked for increases in electricity and heating oil to more accurately reflect what has been spent over the last few years. \$6,500 is being requested in the upcoming budget for electricity. This is what was spent the previous year, and is less than the average of the three preceding years. \$11,500 is being requested for heating oil. This is less than has been spent either of the last two years. In the past, cost overruns in heating and electricity have come out of grant funds. Typical heating season bills should be covered by operating costs.

The books and media lime items have been slightly increased so that the libraries are still eligible for full State Aid funding.

Ruth O'Mara left in September, her replacement, Mary Ellen Ziemba, is several steps lower. This will save approximately \$611.

3. Is there anything specific or new that you plan to accomplish in Fiscal Year 2017 with the level-services budget you've requested?

Not with the level services budget, other than continuing to serve the diverse needs of Montague residents.

4. Is there anything you'd like to ADD to your level-services budget for Fiscal Year 2017? If so, describe what it is, what it would cost, and the benefit to the town.

We want to strategically slightly increase our overall open hours for the Carnegie Library. In Turners Falls, many of our most frequent users are low income and lack transportation. They cannot afford their own computers, internet, and cable access. They rely heavily on the Carnegie Library to provide these services, entertainment, and informational needs. We have at least ten patrons who come just about day we are open. Unless the weather is really bad, we have a line waiting to get in when we open at 1 p.m. four days a week. People bang on our doors and call hoping to get in whenever we are closed. While we are open on three evenings a week, we are only open one weekday morning weekly and many elderly come in during this time. We are closed on Saturdays, Memorial Day weekend – Labor Day weekend. Saturdays are the most convenient day for many families with working parents to come to the library. During the summer, children are out of school and many are participating in the summer reading program. July is our busiest circulation month of the year. Our book return box is often overflowing by Sunday afternoons in the summer. Staff are currently taking turns emptying it on weekends on their scheduled days off.

To have the Carnegie Library open on Saturdays during the summer (except for Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends), as requested by many of its users, would cost \$1,516 annually (assuming 13 Saturdays X 4 hours X 2 staff @ \$14.58/hr.).

To have the Carnegie Library be open a second morning a week as requested could cost as little as \$1137. (Assuming 1.5 hours X 52 weeks X \$14.58/hr.) The library is already open for Story Hour attendees on Wednesday mornings during this time, but then closes back up from 11:30 a.m – 1 p.m. To be open other mornings would be more expensive and is not being requested.

Older residents in particular have requested additional morning hours. Once the middle and high school students get out of school an hour after we usually open, there is much greater competition for the public access computers. It also gets noisier, although we have just enacted a disruptive noise policy with reduced tolerance. Unfortunately we do not have space in our children's room for segregated computers.

We know that Wednesday mornings being open to the public would be popular. When we are open for Story Time on Wednesday mornings, many other adults come in because they see the parked cars, lights on, and families entering. We let them stay because the circulation desk is staffed anyway, but they are disappointed when we ask them to leave when the program is over and the staff eats lunch.

5. What are your plans for improvements and projects for the next five years?

The following goals are mostly drawn from our new five year plan and one year action plan

Goal #1: Space:

To provide safe, adequate, accessible, inviting library facilities that are ADA compliant and meet the present and future needs of the community.

Objectives:

- a. To better maintain the current facilities.
 1. Work with the DPW on keeping the buildings cleaner.
 2. Repair a variety of masonry issues in the Carnegie and Montague Center Libraries.
 3. Work on mold abatement in all three buildings, including drying out the damp dirt floor basement in Montague Center.
 4. Work with the Montague Energy Committee on making all three buildings more energy efficient.
 5. Paint all of the buildings inside and out.
 6. Replace the asbestos floor tiles on the main floor of the Carnegie.
 7. Repair/replace building roofs as needed, including the hanging slates and leaks at the Montague Center Library. The main Carnegie Library roof will probably need replacement, or at least repairs. The bumpout roofs at the Carnegie need immediate attention.
 8. Improve air quality and lighting in the downstairs staff office space of Carnegie.
 9. Redo the urine stained flooring in the Carnegie Library's public bathroom
 10. Bring hot water to at least one sink on the public floor of the Carnegie Library
 11. Have all of the windows washed in all three buildings, including inside the screwed on storms.
 12. New carpets as needed, and get them washed on a regular basis.
- b. To create more comfortable reading and study spaces. Already working on this with donated funds.
- c. To continue to plan for either a major renovation/addition to the Carnegie building or an entirely new facility that meets the needs of library users now and into the future.
- d. To expand library hours as requested by patrons to include more morning hours and remain open on Saturdays throughout the summer.

Goal #4: Lifelong Learning:

To provide a community place that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the love of reading.

Objectives:

- a. To provide a collection that embodies a wide variety of topics to address the public's desire for intellectual and cultural growth.
- b. To provide programs for all segments of the community that both enrich learning and enhance personal growth.
 - 1. To continue to develop in children of all ages and teens a level of learning and socialization through a variety of programs and materials.
 - 2. Develop diverse, strong adult programming.

Goal #6: Technology:

To continue to provide equipment and software which meet the needs of library patrons of all ages.

Objectives:

- a. To remain current with the growth in technology and be able to adapt to change by providing adequate funding and the space to house equipment.
- b. To continue to provide public access computers which are able to run current and future software.
- c. To stay advised of advances in the technology field and be prepared to meet the future needs of our patrons.
- d. To plan for replacement of older hardware and the purchase of software upgrades.
- e. To train library staff and the community on available technologies.
- f. To provide adequate space for equipment that is comfortable, ergonomically correct, and accessible to all users.
- g. To provide access to databases both in the library and from home that enhance the learning capability of the public.
- h. Maintain a visible and accessible web presence.

Other Goals

- a. Organizing and making more accessible our historical collections of local materials and information.
- b. Providing enhanced security for the collections.